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ABSTRACT

Innovative training techniques introduced in response to change in internal structure and external environment of organizations have produced positive results in their management's productivity and effectiveness. A four-year study has been conducted on the use of innovative training techniques by Vanderbilt University's Graduate School of Management, Continental Advisors, and Shell International in Spain. A combination of innovative and traditional techniques meet the objectives of increasing managers' retention factor on cognitive material, raising the probability that managers will become self-motivated, and favorably affecting managers' attitudes and motives towards the organization. (EMH)

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Innovative Techniques for Management Development

INTRODUCTION

Organizations that have introduced innovative training techniques have had positive results in their management's productivity and effectiveness. Traditionally, training programs have concentrated on cognitive knowledge to a specific area. As organizations experience change in their internal structure and external environment the need for innovative training techniques to management development becomes critical.

A four year study has been conducted on the following organizations that use innovative training techniques: Vanderbilt University - Graduate School of Management, Continental Advisors, Shell International in Spain.

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TRAINING OBJECTIVES

The objective in using innovative training techniques is to:

1. increase managers retention factor on cognitive material,
2. raise the probability that managers will become self-motivated,
3. favorably affect manager's attitudes and motives towards the organization,

A. Lumsdaine has found the following innovative techniques used in education and management training programs effective in achieving corporate objectives:¹

1. role plays with audio - video tape feedback,
2. team building groups: group cohesion, member interactions, awareness of defensive mechanism, crystallizing on corporate objectives,
3. multi - media presentations,
4. guest lecturers, specialists in areas that correlate to cognitive material,
5. varying the physical resources of the internal design of the learning environment,

The mix of these techniques can be effective in raising the level of managers retention of material and self motivation.

S. L. Rothafel lists seven techniques used in presenting innovative techniques to managers:²

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|----------|
| 1. style | 4. light | 7. sweep |
| 2. color | 5. contrast | |
| 3. change | 6. brevity | |

Varying the method of transferring knowledge is important in affecting a person's retention of material. The retention factor is the key to have managers internalize knowledge to be used in their specific area of work.

The reinforcement of knowledge retention by innovative techniques is supported by Sperling's research on dichotomous memories in learning.³ Sperling found that people have two types of memories:

1. long term memory,
2. short term memory,

A lecture or case analysis during a class only affects the short term memory. It is through a managers practical operationalizing of the theories, models or concepts that the knowledge being transmitted through innovative techniques can be internalized into a manager's long term memory.

Edward Bartee sees that the learning process has four stages:⁴

1. GENESIS:

the initial awareness that the knowledge exists, includes identification of a need for the knowledge,

2. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCEPTUALIZATION:

the knowledge is identified, described, and conceptualized in the individual's mind,

3. INTERNAL - EXTERNAL ANALYSIS:

the knowledge is correlated and matched up with any previous module segments of related or identical knowledge,

4. SYNTHESIS:

the knowledge is integrated into person's own:

- a. adaptation of the model, theory, or concept,
- b. previous identified and learned knowledge,
- c. added to his warehousing of 'information;' not joining any precepts, models, theories,

Innovative techniques can be seen as a cost effective method of training. The financial investment for this training program has a greater long-run return than other traditional techniques. Innovative techniques accomplishes the added benefit of minimizing the factors of forgetting:⁵

1. repression:

the frequency of physical and psychological distractions are minimized by the incorporation of innovative training techniques,

2. consolidation:

the joining of innovative techniques with traditional lectures and case discussions reduces lag time to operationalize the knowledge,

3. interference:

next, the distractions of unrelated 'concepts' and 'terms' are minimized through the interweaving traditional and innovative techniques,

CASE EXAMPLES

Vanderbilt University

The Graduate School of Management at Vanderbilt University is an international school for management studies. Dr. Igor Ansoff set the policy of the school towards innovative training techniques towards education.

The elements of role playing, multiple evaluation systems, multimedia presentations, experimental seminar groups, national and international lecturers, on site analysis of local and regional organizations, T-Groups, movies and slides correlating to specific areas of study and multiple college curriculums are used as innovative techniques. These techniques are used in behavioral and quantitative classes.

The educational objectives of interweaving innovative with traditional training techniques were to produce "change managers" with the following:

1. a measured increase in the retention factor of the students on cognitive material,

2. raising the probability that students will become self-motivated,
3. increase students capabilities of applying their specialized academic knowledge to real world organizations,

The success of this program has been evaluated by both traditional and experimental evaluation tests. The students tested in the innovative group showed higher scores than the control groups in all educational objectives. The previous three years have seen Stanford University, Northwestern University and University of Tennessee adapting their graduate curriculums towards this model.

Continental Advisors

Continental Advisors is the advisory group of management that advises Continental Mortgage Investors how to invest its financial resources towards real estate developments. In 1973 a new policy towards management training was introduced by the president.

Traditionally, executives were hired who had experience in specific areas of real estate financing and loan management. The new policy was to incorporate innovative training techniques in each division. As the trainee would progress through each division's program he would attain the following learning objectives:

1. a high degree of knowledge in each division,
2. the inter-relationship of how divisions worked with one another,
3. how the advisory body of management correlated its work with the corporate objectives,

The innovative techniques used were: individualized instruction with multi-media aids, T-Group seminars, small group meetings, national and regional inspections of projects, cross departmental training, multiple evaluation systems and strategic analysis of behavioral attitudes.

This method of training proved beneficial to top management and to division heads. Here, for the first time, grass root communication was taking place. A better understanding of each division and how it worked in the corporate model was attained by the trainees. Previously, trainees had only received indepth training in their specific position.

Shell International in Spain

This international oil organization had a control position on southern Spain's energy supply. Shell's top management in Spain concern was to have competent management to control their natural gas monopoly.

During the late 1960's a change occurred in the political committee structure that governed the natural gas industry. The previous bureaucratic training program had to be discontinued. The new political structure directing Spain's energy caused Shell to adapt its training program to introduce innovative techniques.

The new techniques focused on: regional seminars with government leaders, multi-media presentations, joint council meetings with private, government and social action groups, T-Group conferences, political

forecasting techniques and multi - evaluation systems. As the area of energy grew in importance, in the 1970's, the newly trained managers were able to cope with the political and physical factors in energy demand.

CONCLUSION

Designing a training system that interweaves traditional and innovative techniques can produce synergistic results in managers capabilities. The desired outcome is to produce managers that internalize the knowledge and become motivated in applying this knowledge towards his own productivity.

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MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

